What is claimed is:

1. A biodegradable substrate having a durable hydrophilic surface comprising a biodegradable polymeric substrate having a surface, wherein the biodegradable polymeric substrate has been subjected to a corona glow discharge to render the surface hydrophilic.

2. The biodegradable substrate of claim 1, in which the biodegradable polymeric substrate is a sheet-like material.

3. The biodegradable substrate of claim 2, in which the sheet-like material is selected from the group consisting of foams, fibers, films, and fibrous webs.

4. The biodegradable substrate of claim 3, in which the sheet-like material comprises a fibrous web comprising biodegradable polymer fibers.

5. The biodegradable substrate of claim 4, wherein the biodegradable polymer fibers comprise an aliphatic polyester polymer.

6. The biodegradable substrate of claim 1, wherein the biodegradable polymeric substrate comprises an aliphatic polyester polymer.

7. The biodegradable substrate of claim 6, wherein the aliphatic polyester comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyglycolic acid, polylactide polylactic acid, and copolymers thereof.

8. An absorbent personal care product comprising the biodegradable substrate of claim 1.

9. A biomedical device comprising the biodegradable substrate of claim 1.

10. A food package comprising the biodegradable substrate of claim 1.

11. A method of producing a durable hydrophilic surface on biodegradable polymeric substrate, said method comprising providing a biodegradable polymeric substrate; and subjecting the substrate to a corona glow discharge to impart a durable hydrophilic surface to the biodegradable polymeric substrate.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the biodegradable polymeric substrate is a sheet-like material.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the sheet-like material is selected from the group consisting of foams, fibers, films and fibrous webs.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the sheet-like material comprises a fibrous web comprising biodegradable polymer fibers.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the biodegradable polymer fibers comprise an aliphatic polyester polymer.

16. The method of claim 11, wherein the biodegradable polymeric substrate comprises an aliphatic polyester polymer.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the aliphatic polyester comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyglycolic acid, polylactide polylactic acid, and copolymers thereof.

18. A biodegradable substrate having a durable hydrophilic surface comprising coated substrate which comprises:

a biodegradable polymeric substrate which is substantially uniformly coated with a hydrophilic polymeric material in an amount of from about 0.01 to about 2.0 percent by weight, based on the dry weight of the substrate; in which the hydrophilic polymeric material is a polysaccharide or a modified polysaccharide; and the coating of hydrophilic polymeric material will not significantly suppress the surface tension of an aqueous medium with which the coated substrate may come in contact.

19. The biodegradable substrate of claim 1, in which the biodegradable polymeric substrate is a sheet-like material.

20. The biodegradable substrate of claim 19, in which the sheet-like material is selected from the group consisting of foams, fibers, films and fibrous webs.

21. The biodegradable substrate of claim 20, in which the sheet-like material comprises a fibrous web comprising biodegradable polymer fibers.

22. The biodegradable substrate of claim 21, wherein the biodegradable polymer fibers comprise an aliphatic polyester polymer.

23. The biodegradable substrate of claim 18, wherein the biodegradable polymeric substrate comprises an aliphatic polyester polymer.

24. The biodegradable substrate of claim 18, wherein the aliphatic polyester comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyglycolic acid, polylactide polylactic acid, and copolymers thereof.

25. The biodegradable substrate of claim 18, wherein the hydrophilic polymeric material comprises from about 0.05 to about 1.0 percent by weight of the substrate, based on the dry weight of the substrate.

26. The biodegradable substrate of claim 25, wherein the hydrophilic polymeric material comprises from about 0.1 to about 0.5 percent by weight of the substrate, based on the dry weight of the substrate.

27. An absorbent personal care product comprising the biodegradable substrate of claim 18.

28. A biomedical device comprising the biodegradable substrate of claim 18.

29. A food package comprising the biodegradable substrate of claim 18.

30. A method of producing a durable hydrophilic surface on biodegradable polymeric substrate said method comprising providing a biodegradable polymeric substrate; and coating the substrate with a hydrophilic polymeric material in an amount of from about 0.01 to about 2.0 percent by weight, based on the dry weight of the substrate; in which the hydrophilic polymeric material is a polysaccharide or a modified polysaccharide; and the coating of hydrophilic polymeric material will not significantly suppress the surface tension of an aqueous medium with which the coated substrate may come in contact.

31. The method of claim 30, further comprising subjecting the biodegradable polymeric substrate to a corona glow discharge prior to coating the hydrophilic polymeric material.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the biodegradable polymeric substrate is a sheet-like material.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the sheet-like material is selected from the group consisting of foams, fibers, films and fibrous webs.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the sheet-like material comprises a fibrous web comprising biodegradable polymer fibers.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein the biodegradable polymer fibers comprise an aliphatic polyester polymer.

36. The method of claim 31, wherein the biodegradable polymer substrate comprises an aliphatic polyester polymer.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the aliphatic polyester comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyglycolic acid, polylactide polylactic acid, and copolymers thereof.